

Serial No. 10/730,089

Attorney Docket No. 02-107

REMARKS

Claims 2-19, 25 and 27-32 are pending. Claims 1, 20-24 and 26 have been canceled. Claims 27-32 are new. Claims 10 and 13 have been allowed. Claims 15 and 18 were objected to as depending on a rejected base claim but were said to be allowable if written in independent form. The applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 2, 11, 17, and 25 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by De Block *et al.* (WO 01/92073). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Claims 17 and 25 have been amended to recite that the blade rubber and the backing plates are free to move in the first direction with respect to the support member to permit installation and removal of the blade rubber. In the wiper blade of De Block *et al.* (WO 01/92073), the entire blade and fin are replaced as a unit when the blade becomes worn. Thus, the blade 14 is not designed to be removed from the fin 42. Note that the spring strips 30 are fixed to the fin 42 with glue. See lines 39 to 42 of paragraph 0033 of US 2002/0133897, which corresponds to De Block *et al.* '073. Therefore, the blade rubber 14 and the backing plates 30, or spring strips, are not free to move in the longitudinal direction with respect to the support member 38 in De Block *et al.* '073, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 2 and 11 depend on claim 17 and are considered to be patentably distinguished from De Block *et al.* '073 at least for the reasons given above with respect to their base claim.

Claims 2-4, 11, 12, 14, 17, and 25 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mueller (German 10036122) in view of De Block (US 6,836,926) and De

Serial No. 10/730,089

Attorney Docket No. 02-107

Block *et al.* (WO 01/92073). The applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

As mentioned above, claims 17 and 25 have been amended to recite that the blade rubber and the backing plates are free to move in the first direction with respect to the support member to permit installation and removal of the blade rubber. This feature is not shown or suggested by Mueller (German 10036122), De Block (US 6,836,926) or De Block *et al.* (WO 01/92073). Therefore, a combination of these references cannot render claim 17 or claim 25 obvious, and this rejection should be withdrawn.

In the combination of references set forth on page 3 of the office action, De Block *et al.* '073 is apparently being relied on to show the claimed support member. The Mueller reference and De Block '926 fail to show a support member as claimed. The end caps 38 of De Block *et al.* '073 are considered to correspond to the claimed support member. However, as mentioned above, the blade rubber 14 of De Block *et al.* '073 cannot move longitudinally at least because of glue used to fix the spring strips 30 to the fin 42.

Claims 5-9 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mueller (German 10036122) in view of De Block (US 6,836,926) and De Block *et al.* (WO 01/92073) and Bauer *et al.* (German 3,339,414). Claims 5-9 depend indirectly on claim 17 and are thus considered to be in condition for allowance at least based on their dependence.

Claims 16 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over De Block *et al.* (WO 01/92073) in view of Breesch (German 10057253). Claims 16 and 19 depend on claim 17 and are thus considered to be in condition for allowance at least based on their dependence.

Serial No. 10/730,089

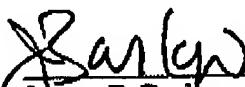
Attorney Docket No. 02-107

Claims 27-32 depend on claim 17 or 25 and are thus considered to be in condition for allowance at least for the reasons given above with respect to claims 17 and 25.

In view of the foregoing, the applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,



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